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solitude, yet have not been proceeded against, though their end was hostile to the state ; so should this receive that charity, which an angelic soul, suffering more keenly than others from the unavoidable evils of human life, is entitled to.

We have offered no apology for expanding to such length our commentary on the character of John Milton ; who, in old age, in solitude, in neglect, and blind, wrote the *Paradise Lost* ; a man whom labor or danger never deterred from whatever efforts a love of the supreme interests of man prompted. For are we not the better ; are not all men fortified by the remembrance of the bravery, the purity, the temperance, the toil, the independence, and the angelic devotion of this man, who, in a revolutionary age, taking counsel only of himself, endeavoured, in his writings and in his life, to carry out the life of man to new heights of spiritual grace and dignity, without any abatement of its strength ?

ART. III.—*Principles of Political Economy. Part the First. Of the Laws of the Production and Distribution of Wealth.* By HENRY C. CAREY, Author of an “*Essay on the Rate of Wages.*” Philadelphia : Carey, Lea, and Blanchard. 1837. 8vo. pp. xvi. 342.

WHAT is political economy ? It is now a late day to put this question, respecting a department of practice, in which men have been studying and acting from the formation of the primeval political community downwards ; and a department of scientific speculation, on which a very considerable library of books has been written within the past century. And yet the question is not without its doubts and difficulties, as we readily find by opening the recent works, which differ widely in their definitions. In short, they are not agreed in what constitutes this science. We will therefore begin with a definition of our own, that may serve us in our remarks, if it has no other use.

Political economy, then, we understand to be the science, that treats of the general causes, instruments, principles, and phenomena of the production, the accumulation, the ex-

change, and the consumption of marketable things ; that is, things which bear a price, and are customarily bought, sold, exchanged, and transferred, or delivered. These are the subjects treated of in books of political economy ; and the problem proposed is one of great intricacy, as well as of great importance, namely, to explain why it is, that one nation has a greater proportional amount of marketable, that is, valuable, things than another ; or, in other words, is richer ; and how it happens that one is growing richer, and another becoming poorer. For we would fain persuade ourselves, that we can, by the help of this science, observe the operations of the social throng, as we may those of a swarm of bees in a glass hive, and trace the connexion of the labors of each with the condition of all ; and thus resolve the doubts that hang over the subject of national weal, and not only deduce the present condition of each community from its true causes, but clearly point out the courses that may lead to growth or decay. But the attempt to study the science with these views is at first disheartening ; for we no sooner open a book upon the subject, than we find ourselves involved in disputes about its extent and appropriate topics ; and then, as we proceed, we find ourselves perplexed with discussions concerning the meaning of words, or the investigations of metaphysical questions, sterile in results ; and the great moving causes of national abundance and want still remain in obscurity. Perhaps the subject is too vast and complicated to be embraced by the human mind, and must remain in its rudiments to the end of time, a field for dogmatism and specious, inconsequential theories to the superficial, and for perplexity to the scientific ; a cloudy element, in which objects do not appear in distinct outlines and true magnitudes, which is too thick and viscid to move in, and in which any attempt at progress proves to be only a stationary struggle. If we are ever to make any advance, the first step seems to be, a more successful classification and division of subjects, by which the looseness and obscurity of language in this department of philosophy may be, in some degree, remedied. We will glance at the leading divisions of the subject ; mention some very important branches of the science, which seem to have been neglected ; and point out what appear to us to be errors in the ordinary mode of treating it.

Every writer on economy is bound to give his readers an explanation of the word *value* ; and, having explained it, to

adhere rigidly to his explanation throughout his work, excepting in cases where he gives notice of his deviation from it, by some qualifying epithet or explanatory clause. This seems to be a very plain method of proceeding, and scarcely to need enforcement by reasons ; and yet we shall find, that a departure from it is one great cause why the study of this science is so little satisfactory. The same writer will sometimes use this word as synonymous with *utility*, sometimes with *cost*, and sometimes with *price* ; and it does in fact coincide with each of them in some respects, but it differs from each in others ; and the use of it in its different senses, and the careless substitution of the others for it, and for each other, as synonymous, (for their signification is also quite diverse,) raise a mist in the writer's own mind most probably, and certainly in the reader's ; and then follow criticisms and verbal hair-splitting. And thus the science of political economy dwindles into a miserable logomachy ; and the reader, instead of making progress in the principles on which a nation is to be made great, and rich, and happy, finds himself involved in grammatical subtleties and verbal disquisitions, as if the matter in hand were what Johnson calls the harmless drudgery of making a dictionary, and not the analysis of the great moving causes whereby millions are brought into a state of well-being or ill-being. But, to return to our definition of *value* ; its proper meaning, in a treatise on political economy, we understand to be, the exchangeable efficacy of a thing ; that is, its efficacy in procuring other things by exchange in the market. This signification is plain, and the ordinary one in commerce ; and, if it had been scrupulously adhered to, except when a departure from it was distinctly intimated, as by saying value *in money*, value *in wheat*, value *in labor*, or using some other additional epithet or phrase, political economy would ere this have been much better entitled to the rank of a science.

The next subject, or rather a part of the same, is an investigation of the causes of value, and of its enhancement and reduction, that is, its laws. And here we have a wide field for philosophical, speculative investigation, which must not be passed by, and which has interest, and may yield instruction, as long as it remains unexhausted ; but our authors are wont to labor and dig in it long after it has become exhausted and yields no fruits. Here too we are presented with

a theory, perhaps two or three, but certainly one, to wit, — that value depends on labor, and that its degree is determined by the quantity and quality of labor ; so that, if the author painfully labors his chapter, it follows demonstratively that it is proportionably valuable, and so, if he of the antagonist theory labors no less painfully his demolition of this same structure, his chapter of the ruins is equally valuable. This second does not, however, confine himself to demolition ; he says, that value is compounded of rent and labor, as Smith asserts ; or, as Say contends, the combined production of man coöperating with the agency of nature. Mr. Carey holds, again, that productive land itself is only consolidated labor, being, like all other value, a condensed extract from human mind and muscles ; and therefore that rent is only the wages of the labor of some former year, or some former generation, and that effective fertility and habitability are created by industry, and may be analyzed into that primordial and all-forming element. And here the author, having achieved his chapter of construction and demolition of theories on this subject, not without much oracular truism, grave triviality, and no-meaningness, after the manner of Malthus, or metaphysics of the Rialto, after that of Ricardo, usually stops, by way of gratulation of himself, and congratulation with his reader, on the retrospect of his curious and admirable diorama of all the workshops and fields of this world, not forgetting to point out the ruins of that other very respectable author's theory.

Mr. Carey usually gives his reader a bird's-eye retrospect, from his balloon at the end of each stage, of the where and whither of the zigzags and dark passages of the route gone over from the starting-point, where was the man upon a solitary island plucking fruit, down to his present stopping-place. Thereupon the said reader, if he have a happy aptitude to astonishment, sees divers of the "laws of nature," as Mr. Carey calls his doctrines, as visible and distinct as the weights and wheels of the town clock in the church tower. He sees, deep down among the *arcana mundi*, not only that labor creates value, but that it alone creates value and measures it, the two being always in the same precise proportion. He begins to apply his new knowledge practically, and finds it work admirably. He finds out thereby, that men by working build houses, and grow corn, and dig iron ore, and make it into iron, and again this iron into steel ; and that even his

goosequill, to write with, is only attainable by the labor of plucking it, at least, if not that of feeding the goose besides ; and that, if he works at a given rate, he will bring more to pass in one hundred days than he can in fifty, — a very useful piece of practical knowledge. And here he stops, perhaps, if he is a reader of easy faith, and prompt to be satisfied with knowledge. But, if he is one of the *nil admirari* school, who looks into things without being wonder-struck with specious appearances, and is given to mathematical tests and practical applications, he readily finds, that any two equally good laborers do not, in the same fifty days, produce the same marketable value ; nor the same laborer in any two successive periods of that length ; and is apt to conclude, that, though this theory of value may be a bright constellation in the heaven of invention of a transcendental political economist, it is, after all, of no great actual utility in navigation ; for its stars dance about in such a maze, and their light is so refracted and warped and criss-crossed by the media through which it comes to him in his sublunary world of affairs, that he cannot, by taking the most careful observation, find out where his ship is, or what land it is like to make.

And why, in this stage of the author's inquiry, all this profound diving below the bottom into the mud ? or soaring with theoretical sublimity, out of sight, among the clouds ? We have no quarry in the air, or pearl oyster in the depths, to consolidate our labor in by making it ours ; but we are as yet merely making our preparations at our leisure, choosing our tackle and adjusting our furniture, which is ready supplied to hand. The whole business of the economist is so far merely making an extract from the dictionary, and noting the obvious results of the comparison of any two prices current.

Value, then, being defined to be exchangeableness, how does it happen that a thing is exchangeable ? How, but because it is transferable, and somebody, incited by necessity, fancy, or whim, wants it ? And he will pay us for it in proportion to the vehemence of his desire, unless he can get it of some one else at a certain rate, or produce it for himself at less sacrifice, by the time he wants it ; either of which, if he can do, he is sure not to give any more for it than he can otherwise purchase or can produce it for, unless he is such an outrageous theoretical economist, that he will give us twice as much, merely because it has cost us twice as much labor or sacri-

fice of one kind or another, and he considers the value to consist in the cost. Now this is all so very plain, that no one would think of uttering such truisms, unless he had the apology, that it was merely preliminary, a sort of premises to sequents that may be worth expressing ; and, therefore, like axioms in geometry, the obviousness of which is their essential recommendation. Now these intuitive aphorisms are economical sublimities to small minds ; and, by the frigid enthusiasm of such, have been puffed out into so great an opaque magnitude, with a hazy *penumbra* of theories, and verbal, dialectic, and grammatical subtleties, as to overshadow and quite eclipse this delectable science of political economy, in-somuch that its “gladsome light” is more dismal, than that of jurisprudence as beheld in Coke’s Institutes.

Value having been thus defined, and the reason given why people exchange what they have for what they want, if they can find it ; and upon what terms, and to what extent they will go ; and all this in few words, and without gratulation or congratulation, as if the riddle of the Sphinx had been solved ; the inquirer then comes to the examination of the phenomena of the markets ; the phases, the waxings and wanings of the price current, from its bright rotundity at the full, — in the brilliant sunshine of prosperity, and heyday of sanguineness and speculation, — to the opposite extreme of obscuration of its entire disk, darkened by the shadow of its own immense bulk, at the gloomy time of glut, plethora, and dead stagnation, typified by zero in the price current. Here, then, the more serious business begins of developing scientific doctrines, bearing more immediately upon legislation and affairs, but yet not very intimately, the subjects being still of a somewhat introductory character, and the doctrines following mostly as corollaries from, or being illustrations of, the explanations already given of the causes of the origin of value or exchangeableness, and the general limits of the operation of those causes. Thus we have said, that value originates in the desire that others have to obtain the exchangeable article, and is limited by the intensity of that desire ; for a man will not so vehemently want a toothpick, or walking-stick, as to give a good farm in exchange, though he cannot obtain it on any better terms. But when we come to more pressing wants, the value will be without any other limit than the means to buy ; as we see in times of scarcity, when hungry

Esau sells his right of primogeniture for a supper, which he will have at any rate ; the only question being, at what most favorable rate it can be had, and, if Jacob be the only vendor in the market, his terms must be complied with, whatever they may be. But, if Jacob is only one of a throng of competitors offering the same article, the tables are turned, and Esau does not bargain until he has ascertained the lowest terms upon which either will part with his pottage, rather than take the chance of its spoiling on his hands. Thus any perishable articles, such as many edible ones are, fluctuate more suddenly, and to wider extremes, than those which are less perishable ; the vendors of the latter, if they cannot make satisfactory terms, being willing to take the chance of keeping them on hand, a month or a year longer ; and this the more readily, if confidence is strong, and credit easy, and enterprise rife, and each man in the community has the command, to a greater or less degree, of the money, goods, capital, in short, of the others. For, though indebtedness reciprocally accumulates and augments all around, and a network of obligations, to and from, involves the whole community, and the circumstances of each one are implicated in the success and honesty, and misfortunes and frauds, of some twenty or a hundred, or five hundred others, still each is easy and sanguine, and confident that he can disengage himself from the meshes if he chooses ; since, as demand is quick and steady, he can at any time, at a small sacrifice at least in his sales, dispose of his stock, collect his debts, and wind up his affairs with a fortune, or at least a competence. And, having this resort at the worst, he is disposed to hold on for the best, and stand out for a high profit, until, by and by, a crash happens here and another there, and the network begins to tremble, and he begins to pull upon the strings, the ends of which he holds in his own hands ; and they break, one after another ; and he begins at the same time to feel himself drawn, more and more strongly, by those in the hands of others ; and he attempts to loose them, but the knots will not yield, for they are fastened by a lock that is governed only by a golden key, which is not to be found ; and he puts his goods and lands into the auctioneer's crucible, for the wherewithal to fashion another, the same proceeding being resorted to by B, C, D, &c., to the end of the alphabet. The press to sell reduces



prices, that is, value in money ; not *value* in other commodities, perhaps, (or even in labor, for that sinks in price, with or soon after the fall of its products,) since they may all fall in proportion. This is a variation of the general mass of vendible things, of which the price current, or money price, having risen to a certain point, then descends, the market having its cycles of five or seven years perpetually recurring ; and the causes of the variation are so multiform and occult, and so intertwined with the pursuits and enterprises and resources of people at a great distance from each other, and occupying different quarters of the globe ; and the markets are so influenced by the wars and legislation and progress of the arts and industry of the home country and foreign countries, and so acted upon by financial operations ; that the vicissitudes and fluxes and refluxes of the price current, in the progress of this everlasting series of revolutions, are more perplexing and inscrutable than the motions of the celestial bodies ; for these can be computed, demonstrated, and predicted ; whereas, the most that science or old experience can do in regard to these commercial phenomena, is, to prognosticate as sailors do of the weather.

This great current and sort of Gulf Stream of the markets is irregularly disturbed by eddies and cross-currents and counter-currents in the market value of particular articles, owing to local and temporary causes of greater or less extent and duration ; as a scarcity or abundance, occasioned by the increase or diminution of the demand and consumption of the particular article throughout the commercial world ; or the extension of the demand to new regions ; or the increase or diminution of the production, in consequence of the fruitfulness or unfruitfulness of the seasons, in some particular thing ; or the interruption of the communication for its distribution to particular places ; or the diversion of labor to or from some species of production ; or the improvements and inventions that facilitate one or another branch of industry. And it so happens, that, while the general market value is rising, that of particular species of articles will be falling in money value ; which is a diminution, in this case, of their actual value, that is, their effective exchangeableness. Mere changes in fashions and habits have often a great agency in these local, temporary, and particular fluctuations of the price current.

Such are the general causes, which give rise to and influ-

ence value and its changes, the consideration and right understanding of which are quite essential in the subsequent inquiries in this science. It is not, however, a part of the subject, which seems to present any great difficulty of analysis. The principal task of the writer is, a perspicuous statement and skilful presentation of all the topics in a connected view, assigning a just proportional importance to them. It is, in general, merely the exhibition of what will be obvious to the intelligent reader on a mere statement, without proof or argument. But the misfortune is, that the teacher of economy brings into this part of his treatise some theory of value in utility, value in exchange, value in labor or wheat, real value as distinguished from that of the market, the substitution of cost for value, or, what is most disastrous, he enters the South American mines without Ariadne's clue, and there loses himself and his followers.

In connexion with value is considered money value or price, which we have touched upon already, in speaking of the general fluxes and refluxes of the markets of the whole commercial world. And here an inquiry is started, which has puzzled writers and readers much, and as yet profited them little, namely, why, independently of temporary fluctuations, the general standard money prices of labor and its products should differ so much in successive distant periods, and also contemporaneously in different places. Why is it, that in Poland a man works a day with his team for a shilling, and without his team for fourpence, while in England he is paid two shillings, and in the United States four shillings, and in Egypt a penny? and why, in England, in 1495, was he paid three-pence halfpenny, and in 1832 two shillings? This has hitherto been an inquiry rather curious, than satisfactory or useful. Some of the economists have, as usual, cut the knot by a theory, which supposes, that the aggregate amount of circulating medium will always bear a given ratio to the aggregate sales, or money value of vendible commodities; and so, plenty of circulating medium makes the high prices, and scarcity the low prices, and thus the whole thing is as plain as two and two for four; and then we have a good deal of statistics of the gold and silver mines. But no materials can be dug up from the mines, of which to construct this hypothesis, which is dubious and misty, unprovable and unprofitable; and all the inferences and arguments deduced

from it rest upon the unsubstantial basis of mere gratuitous supposition.

Mr. Carey has a chapter on *value*, and after it one on Malthus, M'Culloch, Senior, and others, on *value*; then, in the end of his book, a critical dissertation upon the same subject, in which, among other matter, the question is gravely discussed,\* whether Mr. Mill is right in his position, that, "if the wine which is put in the cellar is increased in value one tenth by being kept a year, one tenth more of labor may be correctly considered as having been expended upon it." Mr. Carey says, No. Such are the weighty problems solved by the economical calculus. In the chapter directly upon value, Mr. Carey, as we have seen, maintains, that labor is the sole cause of value, and considers himself as having established twelve conclusions in precisely that number of pages; and among the rest, that the value of an article cannot exceed that of "the labor required to reproduce it," a proposition not precisely true of the value of hay or corn in the spring time after a scarce year. The true proposition seems to be, that, if one can get a thing produced or made, by the time he wants it, for a shilling, he will not give two shillings for it; but, if he cannot so procure it in time, if he wants it very much he will give the two shillings, if necessary. We cannot say, that Mr. Carey gives a very lucid view of value and its phenomena.

The market having been perambulated, and the notions of value, price, and their phenomena having been settled, we come in sight of the long array of the agents and instruments and materials of production, men, beasts, lands, ploughs, ships, machines, stock, capital. Most of these are themselves vendibles; and, of the others, the use, services, or products are the subjects of agreements and appreciation. The two greatest, man and land, are each in some places vendible and in others not so, men being bought and sold in slave countries, and lands not being vendible in Egypt and some Asiatic countries, the government being the universal proprietor. Rent and wages are two leading subjects in this part of the inquiry, in regard to both of which the economists supply us with abundance of theories.

And first, of land, the value of which Mr. Carey considers to be created by labor; for he estimates that felling the forests, making the highways, bridges, fences, hedges, &c.,

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\* Page 277.

† Page 19.

amount to more than the land is worth ; and that all communities make their land, as much as did the people of Malta who imported their soil from abroad. This is a part of the author's general theory, that labor is the cause of, and constitutes and measures, all value, — a theory as sterile as most others in this theory-ridden science ; for what matters it, practically, except to a settler on new lands, whether the value of a piece of the Campagna originated in the labor of making the Appian Way, or in the creation of land itself by the Creator ? Here the land is an instrument of production, of a certain value in the land market, and yielding a certain rent, and paying a certain tax. Whether its value has been dug up from the earth, or rained down from the sky, provided it is there, seems to us, we confess, to be of small import ; it certainly cannot be made to bear very directly in the elucidation of the national condition, if true. For if true, it is too occult and remote a truth to be of practical application, except in the case of a first settler, and hardly in that case ; since, by this very theory, the great city of Granada “ aided in giving value to all the land ” in Spain ; and the making of the Erie Canal, and construction of wharves and a breakwater at Buffalo, give an original value, or an additional value, to the lands in Michigan and Illinois. And so do many circumstances give value to distant territory ; the force and applicability of all which are not available in estimating the price of a given piece of wild land, which the purchaser computes, as the purchasers of other lands, by an estimate of the expense of labor, and amount of crops and of taxes ; and we do not see any evidence of their being more liable to mistake in their computation than purchasers of other lands. The French population of Canada have acted on Mr. Carey's theory of concentration, and stuck to their original settlements on the banks of the rivers ; but the result does not corroborate his theory. It may be said, that this is imputable to other circumstances, such as the character of the people, climate, government, arts, commerce, &c. Let one attempt to make an estimate of what would have been the arts, commerce, character of the population, &c., of the United States, had the inhabitants eschewed the forests. If he could make a satisfactory estimate of this description, that would be something whereon to stand in the argument ; but, as this could not be done, and it would only be all conjecture, in

support of a proposition that is mere theory, we cannot but think that this region is a part of the territory of the science of political economy, which ranks too low in the scale of fertility to yield rent.

This theory is arrayed against that of "Malthus, M'Culloch, Senior, and others," who celebrate the mysteries of soil number one, two, &c., instituted by Mr. Malthus in honor of Sleep,—but, "in that sleep, what dreams may come, puzzles the will," as to going on, as it tends to night-mare; for who, of mortal men, can read the soil series, any more than the geometrical and arithmetical population and food series of Mr. Malthus, *bonâ fide*, patiently, and with an honest and unflinching resolution to be edified and made strong in faith, and not thereby incur night-mare? If, therefore, one theory can be used to batter down the other, and finally both be blown up together, and converted into ruins, and rubbish, and interesting monuments, it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, by this hasty and impatient generation, which has not the leisure and fortitude to go through with wide spaces of diagrams, and long lines of arithmetic, and heap ponderous matters of fact, pile upon pile,—Pelion upon Ossa,—sky-high, to arrive at a sublime demonstration of the reasons of rent, which appears plainer at the outset, and without any metaphysics, than after making a mystery, and trying to solve or dissolve it. Improvements in transportation, in machinery, in agriculture, and all the useful arts and species of industry, and the effect of those improvements upon the national well-being, the condition of the laborers, and the value of given masses of capital, are interesting and useful inquiries; and these Mr. Carey touches upon, though not distinctly, so as to give the reader his whole view at one time upon one point. But all this, instead of being furthered by any theory about soil, of fertility number one, two, &c., or about land being labor, is only thereby embarrassed. It is time, in short, that plain common sense, expressed in plain common language, should be brought into that part of political economy, which is as obvious, at least, to any common farmer or mechanic, as to the most transcendental Scotch economist; indeed, much more obvious.

Mr. Carey mixes the subject of wages of common labor with this inquiry as to the origin and laws of the value of land, this subject having been connected with the said theory of

Mr. Malthus touching the scale of fertility. And here Mr. Carey combats, with success, the notion supported by Malthus, *et hoc genus omne*, that, "as population increases, there arises a necessity for extending cultivation over land yielding a diminished return, attended with a constant diminution in the wages of labor and the profits of capital." Mr. Carey, as usual, does not take hold of this theory and dispose of it in its place or out of its place, at once, but scatters it here and there in his volume. His theory is in favor of concentration, "and dispersion is," he says, "the evil to be guarded against." This is, however, as much a theory as the other, and so Mr. Carey denominates it, and Ireland, at least, is an example against it. This might be expected; for it is a tremendous leap from Mr. Malthus's theory of a universal excess of population, clean across the circumference of political economy, to this opposite one of Mr. Carey, that there cannot be such an excess in any country. What is the utility of framing theories, which are true and false according to the circumstances? Concentration is best when it is favored by the laws, habits of the population, improved arts, and a general developement of physical and intellectual faculties and resources; otherwise it may be an evil. It does generally happen, that the greatest concentration of population takes place under the circumstances, which render this very augmentation a benefit, coöperating with a thousand other concurring causes to carry a nation forward. And thence, as might be expected, the statistical annals show, that usually in the same country, and with the same people, the condition of the laboring and other classes is the best, at the time when they most rapidly increase, and approach to the acme of numbers. So that Mr. Carey easily confutes Malthus out of the statistical records of Mr. Eden, and so far his argument is consolatory and cheering; but, being under the spell, and subject to the destiny, of this political economy, he must needs go directly into the opposite theory himself. The doctrine of perfectibility, that blazed out, with other meteors, at the time of the French revolution, insisted, that there was no limit to the possible, and practicable, and probable progress of society and the arts; and this is a much more grateful doctrine than the contrary one, that little or no progress has been made, or is possible; that we are, at the best, only capable of change, and a revolution about a circle. But, without professing perfectibility, every

one may say, that, as far as industry, arts, laws, and improvement of facilities and resources can keep pace with the augmentation of numbers, such augmentation is desirable, and we may well believe that they may be carried further than they yet have been. Whether the distance before us, therefore, is limited or infinite, the practical result is the same for the present ; and, as long as we can see before us room for advancement, the practical inquiry for the legislator and philanthropist is, What circumstances promote the increase of population, and what are favorable and salutary causes of such increase ; and to what extent, or upon what conditions, is such augmentation desirable ?

Mr. Malthus answers, that it is so to the extent of the means of subsistence. And this is a very true, and at the same time not a very bold answer ; for we already supposed, that the population could not subsist without food. The most material question is, What general causes will augment the provisions ? Mr. Malthus has no reply but to subdue the ungrateful number ten, which he represents to be little better than starvation. He is the very Heraclitus of political economy. Mr. Carey adopts the more cheerful, and at present prevailing view, that, when we are reduced to hoe corn upon number ten, we work to better purpose, and are better fed and clad, than at Mr. Malthus's blessed number one, or any intermediate number.

Having disposed of lands, houses, rents, and all the phenomena of rude and high cultivation, roads, canals, and other avenues to a market, as affecting the economical condition of the community, we next, in convenient order of distribution, come to other species of capital, for land is one species. And we do not see the occasion of all the difficulty in defining *capital* ; for what does it mean but those transferable, deliverable things, which bear a market price ? A slave is capital, as he is transferable and deliverable ; but the capacity of a freeman to earn wages, though as good as capital, since it affords income, is not capital ; for, though he can agree to use this faculty for another, this is an *agreement*, but not the transfer or delivery of a thing. Wages are somewhat in the nature of rent and interest, being, like those, income. And here again we have a theory ; some of the economists maintaining, that accumulation is advantageous, to an indefinite, or, if you please, an infinite

extent. But, as this doctrine cannot be practically applied or tested, it is, like most of the theories in this science, a hinderance, rather than a help, to knowledge. It will be apparent, at first sight, that a large amount of the capital of some countries such as jewelry, pictures, and statues, does not bear directly on industry and production. Still they may, in case of need, be sent abroad, as the jewelry of the South American countries at the commencement of their revolution, to buy ships and other things necessary in war or industry. The species of capital, — what it consists in, — is quite a material consideration in the investigation of the national condition. Are the buildings, for instance, frail, and liable to be blown down in storms, or durable? Are the machines, and instruments of industry of all descriptions, clumsy or well constructed? Interesting investigations lie under these inquiries, which the economists have neglected. Again, not only the quantity and kinds of capital, but its distribution, whether in large masses or small subdivisions, has a material bearing upon the national condition. It has been remarked, by Mr. Webster, on some occasion, that the new law of descent of property in France, substituting an equal division in place of the old law of primogeniture, was sufficient of itself to work out a revolution in the entire social and economical condition and mutual relations of the inhabitants.

Connected with this subject is another of no less interest, namely; Whether the capital, the pursuits, and condition of a country are such, that its industry and productive capabilities are liable to sudden reverses. It is a well-known principle in regard to the laws, that their steadiness, and the uniformity and integrity of their administration, are essential to the well-being of a people, and the steadiness of the national industry and productiveness is no less essential. Now most of these questions, and many others, no less decisive of the general condition, make no figure in books of political economy, and hardly appear there at all, but give place to the fine-spun theories and verbal distinctions, of which we have spoken.

But the most elevated part of this science, and the most neglected, is that relating to the character and habits of the population of a country, and its political and social institutions, and literature, considered in all their phases, as bearing upon their economical condition. Everybody, economist or not, must perceive, that these are the living, animating



principles, that generally determine the destiny of a people in matters of productiveness and wealth ; and yet they have hitherto scarcely made their appearance in works of political economy. These topics do not come at all within the thirty-seven "laws of nature" which Mr. Carey deems himself to have established in this, his First Part ; and we do not see any particular provision for their introduction on "a future occasion," in the hints given by him of the subjects of his subsequent part or parts. There are not wanting signs, from various quarters, that the higher subjects of the science will, ere long, find a place in the works that treat of it. But shall we, it has sometimes been asked, have discussions on ethics, the fine arts, and government, in a work on political economy ? Undoubtedly we shall. We have discussions now on agriculture, capital, trade, navigation, and banking ; not precisely such as agriculturists, traders, navigators, and bankers would give on their respective pursuits, but such as show, or are intended to show, the general circumstances in these several subjects, by which the national growth in wealth is checked and promoted.

It is plain, that the productive faculties are no less affected by the religion, the morals, the social distinctions, the political, and the juridical administration ; why not then consider them ? not analytically and elaborately, as in works devoted especially to them, but in those aspects in which they have an economical influence.

We have long chapters on what Smith denominates *division of labor*, by which he means separation or distribution of employments ; and this thing is exaggerated into an immense magnitude, as if it were the quiet, occult power, that bears civilized society forward to its stupendous achievements in industry. These extravagant notions are going out of date ; but the exaggeration upon this topic, as upon many others, which properly belong to the science, serves but to distort it, and to convert a truth into a practical error ; for it is as important a mistake to assign to a given cause fifty times its true effects, as to attribute a part of those effects to a cause with which they have no connexion. It overlays the subject with a dead weight, and gratuitously ; since nothing is to be done in the matter by legislation or otherwise, however the fact may be ; for this distribution can be carried only to the extent of the limits assigned by density of population, facility

of communication, accumulation of capital in masses, and the formation of extensive systems of production. The practicability of the distribution is incident to certain combinations of circumstances, and will be governed by those ; and those combinations grow out of other causes, which the economist should seek out, and explain, and show the distinction and multiplication of pursuits as being attendant upon them.

This subject of division of labor would thus shrink into its proper dimensions, and give place for other topics, hitherto slightly mentioned, or wholly omitted. For example, the inventive faculty is far more active in one nation than another, and yet we find it mentioned by the economists only very superficially, and by many of them not at all. The mere prejudices, and habits of thinking, of a people, as to useful pursuits, have a more decisive influence upon productive capabilities, than all the causes mentioned by most of the economists put together. Witness the old prejudices of the French in regard to the degradation of the mercantile profession, and the analogous prejudices of the people of Hindostan in regard to certain trades. A cause that operates so strongly ought to occupy the attention of the expounders of national prosperity and decline ; yet we scarcely meet with it in their works. They discourse of the division of labor, the geometrical series, and what not, in preference.

The legislation of a country has an irresistible influence upon the productive energies ; and what do we find in the works of the economical doctors respecting it ? Why, we find those of one side saying, *Laissez nous faire*, “ Let us alone, — pass no law whatever, with the express purpose of furthering production, whether by bounties and rewards, taxes, or otherwise ; ” and those on the other, saying, that you must fill the statute-book with laws and regulations of this description ; and those of each side are equally sweeping, dogmatical, and absolute in their assertions and denials. These occupy the two extremes of the scale, one the boiling point of prohibition, the other the zero of free trade. Can any reflecting man imagine, that science consists in these extravagances ? Is it not evident to every man, that a vast proportion of the legislation and administration of the laws, and the police regulations, have a prodigious effect, direct and indirect, upon productive activity, though no professed

regard is had to it ? Is it not admitted, also, that this bearing is always especially considered in selecting the subjects and mode of taxation, though the object be merely to raise revenue ? This supposes, that something can be known and understood of the effects of laws in this respect ; and this is, in reality, assuming, that the subject may be reduced to scientific analysis and deduction, and that many questions can be settled and put to rest, and many rules clearly established. Upon this subject we shall find the British economists most meagre and unsatisfactory. Only the newest and greenest legislators think of looking into their works for principles. The invocation of their authority excites the smile of men experienced in affairs.

Education is the nursery of national greatness and littleness, in wealth, as well as in other things. It is touched upon by Smith, in treating of regular apprenticeships ; but nowhere presented in its full proportions, by him or any other writer on economy.

Such are the general topics belonging to this subject, and such the deficiencies, as it seems to us, in the writers upon it. But we do not despair of seeing it raised from its degradation, and made more worthy to rank as a science.

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ART. IV.—1. *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language, containing the Accentuation ; the Grammatical Inflections ; the Irregular Words referred to their Themes ; the Parallel Terms from the other Gothic Languages ; the Meaning of the Anglo-Saxon in English and Latin ; and copious English and Latin Indexes, serving as a Dictionary of English and Anglo-Saxon, as well as of Latin and Anglo-Saxon. With a Preface on the Germanic Tongues ; a Map of Languages, and the Essentials of Anglo-Saxon Grammar.* By the Rev. J. BOSWORTH. London : 1837. 8vo. pp. 868.

2. *King Alfred's Anglo-Saxon Version of Boëthius, "De Consolatione Philosophiæ" ; with an English Translation, and Notes.* By J. S. CARDALE. London : 1829. 8vo. pp. 425.